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# Peoples Temple Activities in Guyana

The Peoples Temple first went to Guyana in 1973 to explore the possibility of establishing an agricultural settlement. The Temple purportedly was attracted to Guyana by the political and social structure of the Government of Guyana (GOG) as it moved toward implementing its goal of a Cooperative socialist republic. In 1974, the Peoples Temple was granted a long term lease on 27,000 acres in North West Guyana. This region is primarily tropical rain forest bisected by rivers and is sparsely populated with little government infrastructure. The area is inaccessible by land from Georgetown, the capital of Guyana. It can only be reached by chartered plane or boat.

Between 1974 and 1976, the People's Temple cleared an area of about 300 acres and built housing and other structures. Agricultural projects were started with the goal of making the settlement self-supporting in food. Between early 1977 and 1978, the population of the settlement is said to have grown from 40 to about 1,000 people. Of these

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about 150 were children under 18 and about 200 senior citizens, of whom 138 as of August 1978 were recipients of social security benefits. The others were young and middle-age adults.

The Peoples Temple is a multi-racial organization about 75 percent Black and 25 percent White. The leadership including Jim Jones is overwhelmingly white.